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NH Jacksonville Urges Precautions to Prevent Sports-Related Head Injuries

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According to Safe Kids USA and the American Academy of Pediatrics, more than 30 million U.S. children ages five to 14 participate in sports each year. Of those, 3.5 million will receive medical treatment, with more than 775,000 ending up in emergency rooms.

In a national survey, 33 percent of parents admitted they often do not enforce the same safety precautions during their child’s practices as they do for games. No wonder, then, that 62 percent of sports-related injuries occur during practice.

The Consumer Product Safety Commission offers an annual breakdown on emergency room visits caused by sports injuries to youth under age 15. By far the most common are bicycle-related, with 239,795 injuries (34% associated with the head). Next is baseball, with 84,878 injuries (49% associated with the head), skateboarding (65,130 injuries), football (51,953 injuries), kick scooters (37,574 injuries), ATV’s (32,875 injuries), roller skating (28,559 injuries), softball (27,510 injuries), in-line skating (18,712 injuries), and lacrosse (5,393 injuries).

Taking basic precautions such as wearing proper safety gear can go a long way in preventing sports-related accidents. If engaging in activities involving cycling or motorcycle riding, always wear a helmet. Make sure to wear the chin strap as well.

Every sport is different, but ensure that participants wear the right protective equipment for the activity (helmets, padding, shin guards, eye and mouth guards). A simple bump or blow to the head during a game or practice can cause a concussion (brain injury). Even a small “ding” or slight bump to the head can be serious.

If you think your child has had a concussion, seek medical attention right away and keep your child out of play so the concussion can heal. Look for the following signs and symptoms of a concussion: headache or pressure in the head; nausea or vomiting; balance problems or dizziness; double or blurry vision; sensitivity to light; sensitivity to noise; concentration or memory problems; confusion; feeling sluggish, hazy, foggy or groggy; or just not feeling “right.”

If involved in outdoor sports like football, baseball, volleyball, hockey or basketball, it’s

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important to wear a mouth guard. The American Dental Association estimates that mouth guards prevent more than 200,000 oral/facial injuries per year, including tooth loss and jaw fractures. Mouth guards can be obtained from dentists, pharmacies and sporting goods stores.

Do the right thing for yourself and your loved ones — be proactive in preventing sports and outdoor injuries and wear your helmet, mouth guard and other protective gear.

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